

[Translation]

Import of Wheat

4843. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :
SHRI NITISH KUMAR :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken a decision in the month of April, 1997 to import more foodgrains particularly wheat for supply in the country;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) the reasons for taking such a decision;

(d) whether the availability of foodgrains particularly wheat is more as compared to the previous year due to the increase in their production in the country during 1996-97;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the reasons for importing more wheat from abroad?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) :
(a) to (f) Government constantly review the stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool with reference to production of foodgrains in the country, trend of procurement, requirements for Public Distribution System and Other Welfare Schemes, Open Market Prices etc., and decision to import foodgrains is taken as and when necessary depending upon the situation. In March, 1997, Government authorised the STC to arrange the import of upto 2 million tonnes of wheat during 1997-98 in addition to the 2 million tonnes already authorised for import during 1996-97, to augment availability in the country with a view to containing the open market prices.

The likely production of wheat during 1996-97 is estimated at 64.66 million tonnes as against the production of 62.62 million tonnes in 1995-96 and 65.77 million tonnes in 1994-95, while the per capita net availability of foodgrains has come down from 507.7 gram per day in 1995 to 496.7 grams per day in 1996, the per capita net availability of wheat has slightly increased from 172.0 grams per day in 1995 to 178.9 grams per day in 1996.

Wheat Stock and Storage Facilities

4844. SHRI BRAHAMANAND MANDAL :
SHRI L. RAMANA :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the food storage capacity in India at present;

(b) the quantity of the wheat presently stored;

(c) whether the Government propose to import large quantity of wheat from abroad;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the reasons for importing wheat and the mode of payment thereof by the Government; and

(f) if so, the details of arrangements made by the Government to stock the imported wheat?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) :
(a) At present, the storage capacity (Owned & Hired/Covered & CAP) available with the Food Corporation of India as on 1.3.97 is 228.35 lakh tonnes.

(b) The quantity of the wheat presently stored with FCI as on 1.3.97 was 20.52 lakh tonnes.

(c) to (e) Government, after considering relevant factors like stock position of foodgrains in the Central Pool, production of wheat, procurement trend, requirement for the Public Distribution System and other Welfare schemes, Open market prices etc. decided to import upto 4.0 million tonnes of wheat during 1996-97 and 1997-98 to augment its availability in the country. The STC have so far contracted for import of 26.75 lakh tonnes of wheat as per details given below :

Country	Contract date	Qty. (in lakh MT)	Price in US\$/PMT
Australia	10.12.96	10.00	148.00 FOB
	31.1.97	1.25	156.00 FOB
	14.2.97	2.00	156.00 FOB
	26.3.97	2.50	155.00 FOB
		7.50	154.25 FOB
Canada	11.12.96	2.50	152.50 FOB
Argentina	4.2.97	1.00	173.00 C&F

The mode of payment of the imported wheat by the Government is through irrevocable, without recourse Letter of Credit in US dollars.

(f) At macro level, the present storage capacity available with the FCI is adequate to store the imported wheat. However, the Field Officers of FCI have been delegated full powers to hire additional storage capacity from State Agencies like State Government/CWC/SWC and private parties, as per their requirements.